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1962/10/25

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SECRET - EYES ONLY

25 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Daily White House Staff Meeting, 25 October 1962

1. Mr. Bundy presided. DEFCONS no change.
2. The following matters arose:

a. Chuck Johnson noted that the President had authorized the King Fish shot and that the current testing series is scheduled to go at least until 10 November.

b. Captain Shepard gave a short map briefing of the Soviet Bloc shipping headed for Cuba. His emphasis was on two tankers, the Bucharest out of Odessa and another one considerably closer to Cuba. The Bucharest is being tailed by one of our destroyers but there appears to be no contact with the other tanker which is closer in. The Bucharest has identified itself as being out of Odessa with destination Cuba. If this dope has any significance, it seems to me that it lies in the fact that today we are worrying about tankers which may be carrying jet fuel or even liquid oxygen, both of which can be used on nice defensive surface-to-air missiles or short-range fighter planes.

c. For the first time this week Bundy opened himself up to an expression of views from people around the table. There was an initial inclination to keep silent, but I opened it up by saying that we had better re-read the President's speech of Monday evening so as to be sure we do not lose sight of our primary objectives in this exercise and go harrying after a few tankers or other marginal ships just in order not to lose face with the newspapers. The Soviets, it seems to me, have already knuckled under considerably, and in case anyone is interested (as I told the group), the Legere view is that we must not go off half-cocked on marginal issues, but show our willingness to talk turkey in matters that do not affect the more or less "vital interests" that were initially staked out. As the staff meeting discussion proceeded, I think it is fair to say that the position summarized above was roughly the majority sensing of the group.

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d. Bundy noted that three subcommittees are operating under the general aegis of the NSC Executive Committee: (1) Mr. Nitze's Berlin-NATO Subcommittee; (2) Mr. Rostow's "Advance Planning Subcommittee"; and (3) a "Communications Subcommittee" which Bundy identified by saying that Dr. Wiesner is the White House representative, the Defense Communications Agency (DCA) the pivot, and Mr. W. H. Orrick, Jr. (Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration), the Chairman.

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